Introduction to Ethics  

Spring 2020

Department of Political Science and Philosophy

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**Office Hours:** MWR -12 pm -2 pm or by appointment  
**Class Times and Rooms:** MW 4:00-5:15 pm, RASS Room 239


This text is absolutely necessary and students should purchase a copy before semester begins. Buying the text after week 2 or 3 will leave you insufficiently prepared for the course and unprepared for the first test.

**Course Description**

Sometimes called MORAL PHILOSOPHY, Ethics serves to introduce students to ethical dilemmas and how philosophy approaches these. This is the branch of philosophy that questions what is good and bad, and why certain actions are right or wrong. In this class we will deal with questions such as: What is the relation between ethics and religion? Can we have one without the other? What is ethics? Are there universal moral principles? Should/can all human beings have the same moral values? How do we know what is good? Where do moral values come from; reason? Emotion? Experience? The senses? Or perhaps morality is produced by culture and convention, or from social acculturation? Is an action good or bad in itself? Does it depend on our intentions? In the first half of the course you will gain conceptual tools, and learn something of the ethical systems of the Western philosophical tradition, such as moral relativism, utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, virtue ethics and the feminist ethics of care. In the second half of the course you will apply your knowledge of ethical theories and systems to analyze and evaluate topical controversial issues such as euthanasia, abortion, economic justice, environmental responsibility, cloning, animal rights, violence and war.

**The Class**

For most, if not all of you, this will be your first philosophy class. Please note that this is not a lecture class. I confine the lecture format to classes with 40 students or above. I have lectured on occasion to 300 to 450 students. At ASU we are fortunate that we have relatively small classes, thus a more active and participatory learning environment is both possible and desirable. I will open each class with a 10-minute introduction to the subject matter of the afternoon, and I will open the class to debate and discussion of the course materials for that week, or that particular class. Occasionally I will ask students to lead the discussion of the material or reading assignments for the week, especially if we find ourselves falling behind schedule.
Class Attendance Policy
Class attendance at ASU is mandatory and a class roll will be taken. If you miss three consecutive classes the ASU registrar will be informed. If you miss more than five classes during the semester you may receive a fail for the course overall (depending on the circumstances). The only legitimate reasons for missing classes or leaving classes early are sickness or medical appointments, or a domestic emergency (i.e. ‘car trouble,’ for example, is not a domestic emergency). Exceptions to this reviewed on a case by case basis.

Class Etiquette
Class participation is encouraged, but boorish behavior and/or verbal bullying is unacceptable. I reserve the right to ask any student to leave the classroom. In the event that any student refuses to leave the classroom when asked the campus police may be called (I have been teaching at ASU for 17 years and I have never had to do this but there is always a first time). Be respectful when you address other people (either other students or me). You may disagree with what other people say but the challenge is to show the weaknesses in their arguments and to build better ones.

Class Rules (*unless I am presented with an accommodation)
NO SLEEPING IN CLASS (If you are too tired to stay awake in class you should not be in class, sign out, go home and sleep)
NO PHONES
NO EARBUDDS
NO DIPPING
NO VAPING
*NO LAPTOPS
NO HOT FOOD
PLEASE DON’T PASS MESSAGES
DO NOT LEAVE CLASS AFTER SIGNING IN WITHOUT PERMISSION
DO NOT ENGAGE IN DISTRACTING BEHAVIOUR

Class Preparation
Always bring your textbook to class Bring notebook or note paper and pencil/pen Always complete the reading assignments before class. Be prepared to listen and answer questions.

Assessment
You will take THREE multiple choice tests. These tests will be on the subject matter of the previous three or four weeks of class, these are not cumulative. Each test is usually 30 multiple choice and 2 true/false questions, and you will have 30 mins to take the test. This test is NOT designed to be open book. It is assumed that you have completed the reading assignments and attended class before taking the test. This test will take place in the classroom with a scantron answer key.

Final In-class Blue Book Exam
The final class exam is open book. A detailed rubric of how these papers are assessed is posted on Blackboard. You will be expected to write an answer of about 1000-1200 words (roughly four or five sides of the Blue Book). You will be given an exam paper with several optional questions based upon the last weeks of the course. In my experience the main reason why students here at
ASU under-perform with regard to finals is that they do not engage with course material. Papers often tend towards ‘stream of consciousness’ with few references to what has been studied. It is expected in a philosophy class, even an intro class, that you have learned some of the philosopher’s names and can accurately point to what ideas are associated with these philosophers and how to deploy these ideas in a coherent fashion. Higher grades will be awarded to those who can do some of this.

* All course work must be completed for a final grade.

**Academic Honesty**
Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the University Academic Honor Code, which contained in both print and web versions of the ASU Student Handbook. See the Current Student page on the ASU homepage (URL address http://www.angelo.edulcstudent/) and click on the Academic Honor Code. Acts of academic dishonesty and misconduct as referenced in Angelo State University's Student Handbook will be referred to the Dean of Students.

**Religious Observances**
Every effort will be made to accommodate all forms of religious observance in compliance with ASU OP 10.19. Students who require additional arrangements to be made should make these known in good time in order that arrangements can be made.

**Accommodations for Disability**
ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation. The Student Affairs Office is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting the Student Affairs Office, Suite 112 of the Houston Harte University Center, at 325-942-2047 (phone) or 325-942-2211 (fax) or by e-mail at studentservices@angelo.edu to begin the process. The Student Affairs Office will establish the particular documentation requirements necessary for the various types of disabilities.

**ASU Mission Statement**
Angelo State University, a member of the Texas Tech University System, delivers undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines. In a learning-centered environment distinguished by its integration of teaching, research, creative endeavor, service, and co-curricular experiences, ASU prepares students to be responsible citizens and to have productive careers.

**Title IX at Angelo State University**
Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any
kind. The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. This is done in order to connect students with resources and options in addressing the allegations reported. As a student, you are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator. You may do so by contacting:

Michelle Boone, J.D.
Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator
Mayer Administration Building, Room 210
325-942-2022
michelle.boone@angelo.edu

Grading Scale
A90%Outstanding
B80% Very good
C70%Satisfactory
D60%Min required
F- Fail

The Course
(I reserve the right to change the course from time to time when necessary)

PART 1 Systems of Ethics

Weeks 1 & 2 Class Discussions: Ethical Relativism & Egoism

Weeks 3 & 4 Class Discussions: Utilitarianism and Kant’s Moral Theory

First Multiple-Choice Quiz (week 4)
Weeks 5 & 6 Class Discussions: *Aristotle’s Virtue Ethics, Feminist Ethics, Ethics of Existentialism and Psychoanalysis.*

**PART 2 Ethical Issues**

Weeks 7 & 8 Class Discussions: *Euthanasia and Abortion*

*Second Multiple Choice Test (week 8)*

Weeks 9 & 10 Class Discussions: *Sexual Morality and Economic Justice*

Weeks 11 & 12 Class Discussions: *The Death Penalty and the Environment*

*Third Multiple Choice Quiz (week 12)*

Weeks 13 & 14 Class Discussions: *Animal Rights and Cloning*

Week 15 Class Discussions: *Just War Theory and Global Ethics*

**FINAL**

*In-Class Blue Book Exam*

Monday, May 4, 6:00-8:00pm